



## Using My Star™

Completing the Star is meant to be a helpful process that stimulates and focuses discussion and provides a useful basis for agreeing actions with children. The Star is a flexible tool that relies on the judgement of the professionals using it, and on a degree of understanding and trust between child and worker. Although the Star is designed to be used one to one, we are not prescriptive about the setting or how long it should take – the aim is to have a genuine interaction with the child. It consists of:

- The Star Chart and Action Plan
- The User Guide with easy-read and detailed scales for each of the eight outcome areas
- Flashcards for the Star areas and the stages of the Journey of Change
- An Organisation Guide.

**Make sure that you have received training in using My Star** and that you are familiar with the materials and know when and how they are used in your service. It is vital that workers using My Star understand and use the two Journeys of Change underpinning My Star as this will support consistent results and reliable outcomes data for your service to use.

**Introduce My Star to children and young people** using the resources flexibly, including:

- Talking the child through the points in the introduction to the User Guide
- Devising a short script to introduce the Star in a way that feels natural to you and clear for those you are working with
- Using the illustrated Journey of Change to explain the stages step by step
- Using any opportunities to introduce and discuss the Star before the session in which it is completed, whether in a family or group setting
- Giving older children who are literate and interested a copy of the User Guide to read before the session.

Emphasise that 5 is the top of the Star scales but not the end of the journey and people should continue to improve after they have reached this stage. Some suggested phrases for introducing the Star include:

***“This is about hearing your voice and what you think about your life so that we can work out together what support you need.”***

***“My Star is a way of tracking your journey and finding out about your strengths and needs – there are no right or wrong answers.”***

***“It shows us where you are now and where you want to be in the future.”***

***“The Star tells us what you need in key areas in order to improve where you are now, and it helps you and the service make that improvement.”***

It got me speaking about me.

**Child participant,  
Family Action**

It is time to spend with young people in a non-pressuring way to find out about their background feelings and emotions.

**Manager,  
Dudley Young  
Carers**

For children with a developmental age of seven or over, the aim is to complete the Star collaboratively, selecting appropriate examples from the scales. Some children will want to approach the tool cognitively, reading it through and discussing their life in terms of scales. Others might be able to explore aspects of their life less directly through storytelling, drawing pictures or therapeutic play techniques. The Star spans a wide age range, so the way you are likely to work will vary according to age.

### **Be creative and use a range of resources**

Workers have used drawings, tokens that could be moved around the Star to represent the child – edible ones go down well – and blown-up versions of the Star. It is possible to just use the Star Chart and work through each of the Star points verbally, describing the underlying steps to guide the child. Some children might want to design their own flash cards for the scales or for their journey.

The alien flash cards may be helpful for explaining and illustrating the Journey of Change for the developmental scales (5 to 8), where the focus is more on the child learning and making changes. You or the child can create a story around the alien.

### **Use My Star™ to encourage self-reflection**

This can be done by asking children to explain why they think they are where they are on the scales, taking the time to challenge them appropriately and discuss their views. Whilst the approach is collaborative, it is vital that the worker is aware of their higher status. The worker's aim is to assist the child in gaining insights into their own world, and this needs to be done skilfully.

### **Be positive and non-judgemental**

Used well, the Star will support a conversation that covers many potentially sensitive aspects of a child's life. Ensure that the child does not feel they are being judged, and clarify that, unlike school, the aim is not to get the highest score possible, but to understand their life at this moment, where they might need help, and celebrate what they have achieved. It is their voice and it is important.

### **Use the Journey of Change when deciding where a child is on their journey**

There are two versions of each of the eight Star scales; the brief visual scales include easy-read text, colours and numbers to support using the Star collaboratively with children and young people. The detailed scales are intended as a resource for workers but feel free to refer to specific points for clarification with children if it is useful.

### **It is important to recognise external factors**

Although the Star focuses on the child and family, there may be societal factors holding them back. These may include limited access to decent housing, work, benefits and/or support. Acknowledge these in the discussion and use the notes section to record them. Your service may then be able to use this information to identify gaps in provision, plan future developments or raise issues with policy-makers.

### **Differences of opinion are helpful starters for discussion**

If a child struggles with low self-esteem, they might place themselves towards the start of the journey and need reminding of their achievements. Others might not recognise or admit how they are behaving and might place themselves unrealistically high. Workers may then present evidence of discrepancies between their behaviour and their views, paving the way for a meaningful discussion or working relationship, and a more realistic assessment from which progress is possible.

Visit [www.outcomesstar.org.uk](http://www.outcomesstar.org.uk)

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